

Why we invest in professional learning

Research says professional learning boosts student and school success

Why does our school spend time and resources on professional learning? The answer is simple: Research shows that high-quality professional learning improves instructional practices and student learning.

We're continually learning in response to our students' evolving needs. As we all know, no matter how much experience we have, we confront new challenges each year. They include changes in subject content, new instructional materials, advances in technology, new laws and procedures, and changing student learning needs, especially since the pandemic.

Many of us also desire to grow into new roles and career stages over time, which requires new skills. Professional learning helps develop those skills.

Of course, not all professional learning is high-quality. Professional learning works when it is ongoing, job-embedded, relevant to your and your students' needs, shaped with input from teachers, and connected to school improvement goals. At our school, we work hard to ensure that our professional learning meets those expectations by applying a discerning lens to the range of learning opportunities available.

Professional learning improves student outcomes

High-quality professional learning can help us support students' well-being and meet all students' diverse academic needs. A 2018 meta-analysis (research that combines the results of many studies) found that one year of coaching accelerated teacher

growth at a rate that typically occurs over three years of teaching experience.¹

A 2019 study found that high-intensity teacher mentoring has also been shown to accelerate student growth, with the students of participating teachers demonstrating between 2½ and 4½ extra months of math learning.²

A 2022 meta-analysis found that high-quality professional learning led to improved instruction, which in turn led to higher student achievement.³

High-quality professional learning was defined according to Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, which describe the content, processes, and conditions for professional learning that lead to successful leading, teaching, and learning in schools and systems.

1 tinyurl.com/mpne45st

2 tinyurl.com/24mr9xrp

3 tinyurl.com/2ruc932a



Professional learning supports teacher retention

Research also shows that high-quality professional learning can help teachers stay in the profession – a critical issue for all of us.

In interviews, teachers who had described feelings of burnout reported that high-quality professional learning, such as coaching and mentorship, reenergized them.⁴ In another recent study, teachers of color indicated improving professional learning and leadership development as the two best strategies for teacher retention.⁵

What's the connection between professional learning and staying in the profession? Professional learning can equip us to address challenges that might otherwise derail our growth, and sends a message of value for our staff.

⁴ tinyurl.com/y5yv74m

⁵ tinyurl.com/26juhxtm



We deeply value every educator who joins our team, and it's our hope that by investing in high-quality learning opportunities, we can strengthen the culture of support in our school community and keep this a place where teachers want to stay.

Learn more about high quality professional learning

Resources and information are available from Learning Forward, a nonprofit association that helps educators engage in effective professional learning so every student achieves.

- View Learning Forward's Capitol Hill briefing to learn more about the value of professional learning.⁶
- Explore the Standards for Professional Learning to get up to speed on what high-quality professional learning looks and feels like.⁷
- Check out webinars, publications, conferences and other resources at www.learningforward.org.

When educators keep learning, students learn more.

⁶ learningforward.org/2023/07/06/watch-our-capitol-hill-briefing/

⁷ standards.learningforward.org